

Cohasset Mariner

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Fare-Thee-Well

By Judith Epstein

A year ago when Mariner publisher David Cutler asked me if I would cover Cohasset as the town's main correspondent, I was wary. I considered the proposition and decided to take the plunge — a year's exposure to town government was just the thing I needed. I promised to set the groundwork for the new paper for a year. That's what I did and now I'm leaving.

Last week I walked down South Main Street, and as I passed the various stores and establishments, owners and merchants waved, called hello or thanked me for a recent article the Mariner might have afforded them. I could scarcely believe that this was the same town I had entered as a stranger a year ago and that I was choosing to leave it after the paper had proven successful. In short, I hate to go.

I wasn't well prepared to be a reporter. I was used to answering, not asking questions, as a reference librarian at the Marshfield Public Library. It took me a year, but I have learned well. If I am not avoided in time now, people are stuck with me asking questions. I wasn't prudent. I'd ask anything and often found out more than I cared to know.

Cohasset is a town of committees, and almost any night of the week could afford an ambitious reporter with a rigorous assignment. I soon became aware of the midnight rides after a meeting adjourned, practically dead asleep at the wheel, back to the office where I would try to compile at the typewriter an accurate account of hours worth of conversation.

I remember especially Wednesday morning's awful empty sick-from-lack-of-sleep feeling from putting the paper to bed all Tuesday night. Then would come the exhilaration from seeing the finished product come off the press, a creation, really, followed by the constant nagging reminder that tomorrow presented more news that would have to be gathered and prepared for the next week. It was like always having to do homework.

Though I grumbled about it, I had a secret love for this complex culling of what really happened from hearsay and opinion. We, who roamed Cohasset — the Mariner, Mirror, Ledger, WATD — had become experts at weeding the news. We became competitors too: we'd each bend our head toward our notebooks, greedily ascribing that which would hopefully put the other out of business. The Cohasset press corps also became friends, members of its own secret society, because we shared not only the news but also the stuff that could never get printed.

Although I tried to retain a professional stance, I became friends with the townspeople, as well, and thereafter nervously tread that nebulous thin line which divides the worlds of business and pleasure. I hope I succeeded. Whether or not I should have been seen riding with the Selectmen Chairman on his moped, or goofing around with the Police Chief in the Log and Line, I don't know. I don't regret that I did those things.

Nor do I regret having devoted a year of my life to Cohasset via the newspaper world. It made me do things I never would have done otherwise. I climbed up the inside of the First Parish Church steeple to have a first hand look at the inner workings of the town clock, and also had the vertiginous but never-the-less lovely view of an October afternoon spread out against the Common. I walked the grounds of the newly finished reservoir with its proud superintendent on what must have been the coldest day of the winter to learn how the natural watershed feeds into Bound Brook and then on to Lilly Pond.

The paper persevered beyond the few months life expectancy some people had given it. Praise came in hot and heavy, though unwritten, and I ate it up, the porridge that kept me going. The criticism, also mostly unwritten, was not as plentiful, but when strategically applied, I felt it to the bone. Most of all I discovered that newspapers are like most people, troopers at endurance.

It is hard to think of myself now as being separate from the paper. I was not just some reporter working on a weekly newspaper called the Cohasset Mariner. I was of it, passionately.

Without getting corny and without going into Ecclesiastes and all that, let me conclude by saying that it is time I moved on. Bob Dylan sings that goodbye is too good a word, so he just says fare-thee-well. I'll choose fare-thee-well because I'm liable to be back.

Around Town Hall

SEAWALL REPAIRS

Repairs for the Border Street, Margin Street and two Sailing Club seawalls, has been awarded to Eastern Gunite Corp. at a cost of \$15,680. As there is \$15,000 available for the work, \$680 will be transferred to cover the total amount.

SURVEY BOARD

A Massachusetts State Building Code Survey Board has been appointed for Cohasset. The board was formed at the request of Assistant Town Counsel Richard Henderson to cover all legal aspects of the code. Building Inspector James Litchfield appointed Richard Ainslie as a disinterested person; Selectmen appointed Arthur Lehr, Jr., as surveyor; and Fire Chief Charles Peipenbrink was automatically appointed as stipulated in the law.

CONVERSION DESIRED

A public hearing of the Cohasset Zoning Board of Appeals will be held Tuesday, Sept. 18 at 8 p.m. concerning the premises of F.H. and S.P. Wood of 68 Pleasant St. The applicants seek a Special Permit to convert their residence from a one-family dwelling to a three-family dwelling.

PORCH CONSTRUCTION

A public hearing of the Zoning Board of Appeals will be held Tuesday, Sept. 18 at 8 p.m. concerning the premises of Susan Weil, of 619 Jerusalem Road. The applicant seeks a Special Permit to allow the construction of a screened porch on the rear of her residence located in the Watershed Protection District. The applicant is also petitioning the board for a determination as to whether the installation of a so-called French drain surrounding the residence on the south, east and west, so as to carry surface water into Straits Pond, is an allowed use under the town zoning bylaws.



SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

Joseph Rosano, president of the Sportsmen's Club on Rte. 3A, appeared before Selectmen with copies of the minutes from two meetings. Rosano had been asked to return evidence to Selectmen which would show that the club was still ongoing. Rosano also presented a copy of a tax bill.

According to Rosano, four new members joined the club and a vice-president and secretary were elected since he last met with Selectmen. Jane Toomey, the only woman in the club, was allowed associate membership. Selectman Chairman Arthur Clark said a decision on the club's viability hasn't been made.

WINTER SCHEDULE

Selectmen will begin their winter schedule after their Sept. 5 meeting, that is, every Wednesday night at 8 p.m. in the Town Hall.

DISPOSAL STUDY

A committee of five people will be appointed by Selectmen to study the town disposal area and alternatives.

PERMIT GRANTED

The Appeals Board has granted the Hagerty Co. a Special Permit for the addition of an attic office and a dormer at 38 Parker Avenue.

The board found that the slight addition planned would not be substantially more detrimental than the existing non-conforming use to the neighborhood and would not be injurious or dangerous to public health or hazardous because of traffic congestion.

ADDITIONS ALLOWED

The Appeals Board granted Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Tye a Special Permit to attach a small building to the main house with a second story created on the addition, as well as a slight addition to the south side of the kitchen. The board found that the proposed alterations will not be more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing non-conforming use.

CONVERSION DENIED

The Appeals Board denied Albert and Paula Meallo of 187 South Main Street a Special Permit and Variance for conversion from a two-family to a three-family residence. The board found that the house failed to conform with width, depth and front and side yard requirements. The proposed parking spaces would further violate zoning bylaws, so that a variance would be required. The applicants didn't prove that a hardship existed owing to soil condition, shape or topography of the property.

AUTOHAUS EST.

APPROVED

A Special Permit for the construction of a retail and service establishment has been issued to Autohaus for the sale of new and/or used automobiles on Autohaus property located diagonally across Route 3A from their present facility.

The building is subject to the following conditions: A "Stop" sign will be placed to control traffic from the "Right of Way" entering onto Route 3A; a skimming catchbasin will be installed and properly maintained and serviced, which will remove oil and gasoline from surface drainage coming down the "Right of Way" or before it enters the highway drainage system; there will be no final disposal of petroleum products on the property; by the use of evergreens or palisade fencing, parked automobiles on the property will be concealed from the highway.

Purpose Circumvented — Letters

To the Editor:

I read with great interest your article on the donation of eighty acres of land on Forrest Avenue, to the American Legion by my grandfather, August F.B. Petersen. I then read your editorial, and that mandated this letter.

My grandfather came to this country from Denmark, at the age of seventeen, with a few pennies and the clothes on his back. Over the years he worked his way up the ladder

and became quite successful. The donation of the 80 acres of land was my grandfather's way of showing his love for America.

We who knew and loved August Petersen could tell you that he would never demand strings when giving a gift, but his wishes were very well thought out, clearly and concisely.

What seems to be involved here is nothing more than plain old-fashioned mercenary

gain on three sides; the Legion, the developer, and the town. What seems to have been forgotten is the true spirit in which the gift was given.

The so called hostility could come from those who knew and loved August Petersen and feel that the Legion and town have a moral obligation to carry out what was in my grandfather's heart.

Nancy Parker Fox
Winthrop, Maine

The Brain Teasers Are Coming